Rec'd Georgetown - 11/30/78

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PEOPLES TEMPLE AGRICULTURAL MISSION
P.O. Box 893, Georgetown, Guyana, South America

5 July, 1978

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Dear Friend;

We have appreciated that you have been sensitive to Peoples Temple and thus we are sending you these articles from the Sun Reporter about the work of Peoples Temple so you can put into perspective some of the opposition that Peoples Temple has faced. If you have received any negative articles about Peoples Temple lately they represent only a small segment of the United States and are only sensational small town rags.

Of course, one knows from a religious perspective that if you are doing the work, you will face persecutions. Whether you are religious or not, you can evaluate the facts for yourself. Peoples Temple is a group that has for thirty years devoted its energies to racial and economic equality, a goal that has taken the toll of many lives such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Peoples Temple, out of a deep commitment to its principles, has chosen to live in Guyana, a third world nation. There are those who are racist and reactionary who do not want anyone to survive and be successful in exemplifying these ideals, if they are in any way a living proof that an interracial egalitarian lifestyle can survive. You can see for yourself when you visit Jonestown, and we welcome guests daily, that Jonestown is an interracial egalitarian socialist community.

There are a few individuals, and we in no way feel that these people exemplify those progressive individuals in the United States who have been most supportive of Peoples Temple, that have attempted to dishonor this project. There are those who attempted to do the same thing to Martin Luther King, Jr. after his death when they publicized that he indulged in sexual orgies, a rather difficult thing to believe since he spent his time out in the streets with the people day after day facing racial attacks and was far too busy and dedicated to "indulge" in hardly anything even the most normal type of relaxation. However, it is an obvious tactic of racists and reactionaries to discredit a person through this kind of unproven innuendo rather than to come to grips with their dedicated efforts to improve the human condition. There has never in history been anyone who has tried to assist humanity, even in the slightest way, that hasn't found an element that is anti-humanitarian and threatened by any change that benefits other than himself.

We thank you for your attention to these articles. We welcome objective criticism and beg you to contact us directly if you find any area in our work

that we can evaluate to make improvements. We also appreciate you reading these articles so you can see the other side of the situation. The author, Tom Fleming, is a very prominent editor of this black newspaper, the most prestigious newspaper of its kind in California. The publisher and owner of the paper, Dr. Carleton Goodlett (Ph.D, M.D.) is President of the National Newspaper Publishers Association--Black Press of America as well as Publisher of the Sun Reporter and Metro-Reporter Newspapers. Both gentlemen are planning to visit Jonestown and have followed the work of Peoples Temple very closely in the United States.

Thank you again for your objectivity.

Cooperatively yours,

Sharon Amos

Sharon Amos
Assistant to Cde. Jim Jones

NOTES FROM THE LAST FRONTIER —— By: Richard D. Tropp

I arrived here in September. I came in on a fishing boat owned by the community. We traveled up the Barima River, then on the Kaituma, through a landscape that has changed little since the days when Sir Walter Raleigh came through, searching for "El Dorado," the fabled golden city. Dreamlike, timeless.

The Northwest Region of Guyana has a tropical climate, but it's remarkably, surprisingly pleasant, tempered by trade winds. Even in the rainy seasons, there is no more than two hours of rain a day. Though not a day goes by without sunshine, thanks to the trades and the 40-50% cloud cover, the heat is never oppressive. Nights are in the upper 60's, cool enough for a light jacket. I couldn't begin to describe the natural beauty of the wilderness, the stillness that you can almost hear. The people in the capitol (Georgetown, about 200 miles away), actually call this part of the world "paradise."

The community I live in is located on one of the world's last frontiers: the tropical forests near the Venezuela-Guyana border. Here, on several thousand acres of virgin jungle allotted by the Guyana government in 1973, a group of Americans has been building an agricultural project. Already over a thousand acres have been converted into cropland and pasture. Bananas, cassava, peanuts, rice, vegetables, and beans of many varieties are being cultivated. Plus: chickens, pigs, cattle, goats, ducks and rabbits. The community is the site of extensive experimentation with the aim of developing a continuously-cropped and varied array of foodstuffs that will not only feed its nearly 1,000 residents, but will help boost the productivity of the surrounding region.

Perhaps more remarkable than the hundreds and hundreds of acres of tropical forest that are now producing food; more remarkable than the development of this lovely community out of virgin jungle, the housing construction, streets, electric lighting, sanitary facilities, fruit trees planted everywhere, is the population of Jonestown. Almost one thousand people are here in Jonestown', and more come in every week. There are people here from every race, every background. Our farm supervisorial staff, for example, includes a Pomo Indian woman, a young man from Northunberland who grew up on a farm in the shadow of Roman ruins, a former county attorney from Northern California, a young man from the Philadelphia ghetto who, through the inspiration and help of Jim Jones, studied agronomy at Cal State, a young woman from rural Mississippi, a 55-year old farmer chemical engineer from a prominent family in Delaware, and an ex-Mormon dairy farmer from Shasta County.

250 senior citizens, mostly black, mostly ghetto-dwellers who suffered from hypertension, are here finding a place of peace and beauty, a new lease on life. The same goes for the over 200 teenagers and young adults who were unable to find the handle for their lives in the big cities. Here they have found something to put themselves into, a community to build, a challenging environment in a black nation.

The children have a future here. They are not, to use Paul Goodman's phrase, "growing up absurd." The world here makes sense. People are now part of a community, on land that is theirs, part of a purpose that is not confined to this community, but which is the pulse of the "third world." Here we have joined hearts, hands and minds with the Guyanese people in a massive effort to build a new society, based on the foundations of love and work, co-operation and equality.

The Peoples Temple Agricultural Project has become a model co-operative. Guyana has been trying to get her people to settle the rich interior here, to develop local resources, to move towards self-sufficiency and economic independence. We are doing just that out here, and in the process, as Americans, are building a kind of good will between the Caribbean peoples and our native United States. Government officials have praised our work highly; American officials have come and have been impressed. One of Guyana's highest ranking ministers, a man who has traveled the world as a spokesman for a non-aligned nations, and who has addressed the U.N. General Assembly on several occasions, was moved to tears by what has been accomplished here, by the total absence of racism, sexism, and 'ageism,' and the place of honor given to senior citizens and children, the meticulous care of our medical staff, the happy faces, friendly and open people who have taken Guyana, and her people and her goals to heart. Visitors are chartering planes to come here, to see this group of Americans who defy the stereotypes.

My main task in coming here was to organize a high school program for about 90 youngsters. Besides several levels of instruction in language skills, math, and social studies, we have put together a "community development institute" that embodies practical study and training in all areas of building this entirely "home-made" community. The students are involved directly in learning about every aspect of agriculture, sanitation, mechanics, construction, food processing, composting, power plant technology, even some civil engineering and surveying, and more. The development of the community is the "open air" school that brings study and practical application together. Since the school program merges with the life-style here, there is no such thing as "irrelevance."

It has been the most exciting, challenging, and rewarding educational experience of my life.

The students include local (Amerindian) teenagers along with the American settlers. We have dramatic proof out here in the jungles that social and environmental conditions determine what children will be like, and can bring about profound characterological changes that are almost unbelievable.

I have seen "street" kids who craved only junk food, television and cars transformed, into gardeners, builders, scientists, leaders ... involved in constructive activity, regaining their health, eating and liking the natural foods here, developing confidence, responsibility, maturity. It is awe-inspiring to see them responding to the challenges of work and study in a culture, an environment that they can relate to. Some of the young people here were literally given up on by everyone -- even the juvenile authorities didn't want to deal with them.

I'd note that quite a few of them -- had they remained on the streets of San Francisco -- would have added hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of dollars to what is being spent on programs for rehabilitation, and for the repair of vandalized property. Some of them were hell raisers and they would have no doubt helped to heat up the inner city.

I have also been working on a program for the senior citizens who have come here to retire. The oldest, a woman whose parents were slaves in Virginia, arrived here in January. She took the up-river trip in our fishing boat, deep into this beautiful, enchanting place. She will be 108 years old in [illegible]. Another fellow here, who came three years ago when the original

jungle acreage was being cleared, is 102. He remains active, by his own choice, making furniture in his own shop.

We just cannot get the old folks here to "retire". The place turns them on, makes them forget they're old. Their wealth of experience has helped in numerous ways to find some tried-and-true, home-made solutions to problems that the younger folks never knew about. We have now set up a kind of high school program for those adults and seniors who didn't receive the advantages of an education (many grew up as children of tenant farmers and migrants, and had practically no schooling). It is moving to see people in their 70's and 80's diligently studying. They have also organized their own handicrafts and art classes. Their work has been displayed for the many visitors who come to the community, already famous and highly-regarded throughout the country.

Visitors stream in here. Guyana officials, as well as Americans, such as California's Lt. Governor Merv Dymally, anxious to see what has been termed by the Guyanese as a "model of co-operation."

The amazing thing to practically all who come is not only the co-operative spirit, the comprehensive planning and management that has gone into the project (with no outside funding), but the total lack of racism here: blacks, whites, Amerindians, latinos, Orientals, everyone working together like a big family. We know it has been precisely this level of human co-operation that has made the project such a success.

I wanted to also remark on the extensive medical services we have been able to bring to the region. Our clinic has saved lives, and is doing wonders in preventing and controlling parasite-caused illnesses common to the tropics, such as gastroeneuritis.

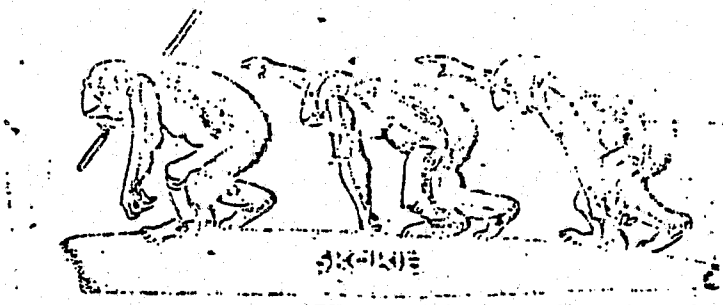
The level of health care among residents here is very high -- higher than it was previously. The climate, diet, and peaceful, pressure-free surroundings have practically eliminated hypertension problems, kidney ailments, even heart problems among the elderly. A group of specialists and naturalists in the community have been working on herbal medicines, and we've had many successes - for example, with papaya, in healing sores.

I took a leave from the college for one year. I didn't know what I was going to do when the year was up. I cannot see anything in front of me now but to continue with the work that is going on here. I will doubtless return to the States at some time in the future, but now, that is far from my mind.

The beauty here; the sense of the unexplored; the challenges of building a new community; the children who today have a new lease on life; the older people who can finally live in peace, in a place that is in real sense theirs, where they can have a voice, a dignity; these are all compelling reasons for me to remain.

While it may seem that this jungle is a place of excape, a retreat from the modern world, it is quite the opposite: here all is growth, all is rebirth, new horizons, becoming, development, a future.

Retreat? Here in the South American jungle, we are stepping forward into the challenge of finding a future for mankind.



Thomas Fleming's

Weekly Report

Despite the fact that Jim Jones has temporarily departed the California scene to begin another career in Guyana, there are former members of Peoples Temple who still would do him physical harm or use the courts to destroy him.

Jones, the sociologist who has used Christianity to aid him in helping those of the human race who need help, was under constant attack by those who have followed a program of hypocrisy in their everyday relations with their fellowmen.

The writer was first attracted to Jones when Peoples Temple had its headquarters in Mendocino County, and when hundreds of persons who had been classified as pariahs by the rich and powerful made pilgrimages to Mendocino County every week, particularly for the Sunday services.

The services conducted by Jones resembled the sermons preached by Jesus Christ during his short stay on Earth. The sermons offered to the masses by Christ so angered the rich and powerful that they conspired to have him put to death.

This writer did not know Jones during his sojourn in the northern part of the state, and he was attracted to him by a series of articles appearing in the San Francisco Examiner, by the onetime religion editor, one Robert Kinsolving, who later turned out to be just another Bible thumper from that curious section of the country where the Bible thumpers uphold all of the vicious practices of white supremacy.

Jones brought people of all colors and speech into the fold to worship in peace.

There are many persons who find it difficult to find their particular niche in life, and such people are in dire need of assistance to find the niche that best suits their needs.

The majority of niche seekers are looking for what can best be described as a utopia, and those who went to Jones were not free of thoughts of searching for a land of milk and honey.

Some of those who did not find their utopia fell away and began to launch bitter attacks upon Jones, which fact was not ignored by a number of publications in the state of California.

These publications immediately began to print lurid stories picturing Jones as a charlatan of the first degree--an individual who claimed super healing powers, an individual who through devious means acquired property and money from some of those who went to him in search of utopia. Jones was also charged with possessing

Guyana is in South America, and was once a British dependency; it then was called British Guiana. Later on it became a sovereign nation.

The population is largely Black, with a considerable number of former British subjects who emigrated from India in search of a better world during the British reign over that great Asian country.

A Black man is president of the country. It is interesting that all of the Blacks found in the New World were brought to the New World from Africa as chattel slaves. Many of the Blacks brought to Guiana escaped and fled to the interior jungle areas, where they lived with the indigenous Indians as free people. Of course, the people found in the New World by Columbus were called Indians.

Where Jones led his great trek in Guyana is an area that is a virtual jungle, there before the American pioneers led by Jones disembarked from a boat and hacked out a road through the heavily forested terrain to a designated spot.

More trees and other shrubbery had to be cut and burned before the settlers could erect their first buildings.

Now the cleared area is known as Jonestown and there are perhaps more than 2,000 people. There are some people with medical skills and other skills that mankind has felt so essential for survival.

Among the new pioneers were several hundred young persons, some of whom left home to go abroad with the permission of their legal guardians.

Some of the onetime legal guardians, some of whom are parents of the young persons in the new settlement in Guyana, have been making rumbles that Jones is a person who should be charged with kidnapping. Furthermore, the allegations are made that, even if Jones did not kidnap any of these persons, he is holding them in Guyana against their wills and that in fact the persons held would be only too happy to rejoin their onetime legal guardians or relatives if they could.

The latest allegations against Jones sound just like so much humbug, just as past allegations sounded before Jones started what seems will be the greatest experiment in his career.

Jonestown is self-supporting. A great variety of crops are produced, which feed this tiny colony of transported North Americans; sufficient crops are raised so that some produce goes to the

Relatives Praise Jonestown, Gy.

Recently Peoples Temple held a press conference to let the public hear about Jonestown, Guyana, from people who had just returned from a visit with their relatives at the Agricultural Project. Rev. John V. Moore, former superintendent of United Methodist Churches of Northern California, and his wife, Mrs. Barbara Moore, spent several days with their two daughters and grandson in Jonestown. They came from their home in Reno, Nev., to relate to the public the great beauty and accomplishment of the thriving community in Guyana. The Moores are not members of Peoples Temple. They visited Guyana at their own expense, and traveled to San Francisco from Reno at their own expense for the press conference.

Rev. Moore said, "I'm John Moore, pastor of First United Methodist Church in Reno, Nevada. The two words that come to my mind as I tried to reflect upon my experience (of Jonestown) were 'impressive' and 'amazing.' It boggles the mind to see that great clearing (of land) and to understand how so much could have been done in such a relatively short period of time. I think almost a thousand acres have been cleared, and most of it has already been planted with various crops.

"I had a feeling of freedom. Neither in Georgetown, with 25 or 30 people coming and going all the time with total freedom, nor at the project itself did I have any feeling that anybody was being restrained or coerced or intimidated in any way."

When asked whether people told him they were happy, he responded, "It was so obvious. We talked about what they were doing, and all of them were engaged in some activities or work that was particularly important for them. We talked to anybody and everybody we wanted to, and we wore ourselves out walking around the facility. We went to the piggery, the chickery, the dairy, the sawmill, the cassava mill, the nursery."

Rev. Moore went on to tell about the day care nursery, the accredited school, and a health facility that is "the best facility in that whole region in Guyana." Rev. and Mrs. Moore commented on the "beauty" of the inclusion of older people in the community life, and the library with more than 8,000 volumes, where old and young read for pleasure or do research. Mrs. Moore described both the medical and the educational services as "excellent" (one of the Moores' daughters is a nurse, the other is a teacher), and went on to speak of the project as a whole as "a community of caring and sharing with the added dimension of love. In a sense it reminds me of a New Testament community," she reflected, "in the purest sense of the word, in the love and concern for all. It is a beautiful, heroic, creative project. It is absolutely miraculous." One newscaster commented Mrs. Moore seemed very impressed and asked would she describe it as "utopian." "Yes," she answered, "it's a lovely utopia."

Other specifics were provided as well about the lifestyle and quality of life in Jonestown: "It is a cooperative...Food is provided for everyone. There's medical care for everyone, and educational opportunities for everyone. There are work needs and opportunities for the members of the community. One of the great things is the opportunity, for some of the younger people particularly, to be learning skills when that opportunity is not present here."

Mrs. Moore added that the housing is well suited to the specific needs of the residents. "It's a complete city, and one thing they do encourage is the nuclear family. You can choose to have your own home, or, if you're a single person, you may live in a dormitory, whichever you prefer. The older folks have their neat little yards and white picket-type fences, with the opportunity to

[Continued on Page 34]

Peoples Temple

Relatives Praise Jonestown

[Continued from Page 31]

garden, or just sit." Attorney Charles Garry, who was also present, added that, when he visited, he saw them put up a cottage in one day, from the ground on up ready for occupancy.

Garry concluded with remarks about the medical center in Jonestown, headed by a young doctor who was put through medical school by Peoples Temple and who graduated "in high honors. He said that he was particularly impressed with "the senior citizens' cottages right around the (medical) compound." They are looked in on by medical helpers first thing every morning. "Medical services are provided free to every resident on the project, and extensive clinic work is done in the surrounding community. The medical compound is something you have never seen, and you probably won't see it unless you go there. It's almost a miracle."